

Salem County Office of Archives

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TIME LINE II Eighteenth Century Salem County, New Jersey – 1700 through 1799

Please refer to original documents for confirmation.

The English speaking Salem Colony is now twenty-five years old.

New Sweden has now become New Salem or Salem and has changed rule three times; from Swedish to Dutch to English. The future success of the Colony now seems to be insured and the different nationalities have settled into a peaceful coexistence.

- 1700 The Friends build a new brick Meeting house in Salem Town.
- Settlement of Alloways Creek Township has been growing and is mentioned officially 5/12/1701, as are the Townships of Elsinboro, Mannington, Penn's Neck, and Pilesgrove.
- Instructions from Queen Anne that the Proprietors give up their powers of government to the Queen; however, they will continue to retain their rights to the land. East and West Jersey are re-united as the Province of New Jersey.
- Salem passes an Act to regulate roads and bridges, (amended in 1745).
- September 17th the First Court of Sessions is held in Salem Town. There is strong evidence that the first plot of land given by John Fenwick to the County of Salem on which to build a court house and jail was located near the foot of Old Wharf St. (now Broadway) between the wharf and the road leading to Tilbury.

The Centerton Inn is established as a stagecoach relay stop on the long road between Greenwich and Philadelphia.

- 1707 King's Highway is extended south from Salem to Greenwich through Quinton's Bridge, Hancock's Bridge, and Mason's (Maskell's) Mill.
- 1709 The boundaries for Salem Town are finally resolved.

An Act is passed for building & repairing jails and courthouses in the Province of New Jersey...included in this Act it was stated that Freeholders shall assemble and meet the first Monday in March yearly.

- A new stone jail is built in Salem Town.
- The Governor of the Crown Colony of New Jersey is given authority by the Archbishop of London to name Surrogates in each County.
- 1713 Salem County is incorporated.
- Land is given by John Jaquette for St. Georges Church in Churchtown (north of Pennsville). A log church was built and the first services were conducted in Swedish. The consecration of the church took place on March 31, 1717.
- Joseph Ware gives land in Hancock's Bridge for the Friends to build a Meeting house.

The High Sheriff of Salem County James Sherron is murdered by four slaves. Justice was swift and terrible and the slaves were executed just north of Salem Town in Claysville.

A whipping post is erected in Salem Town.

Jackanias Wood, son of landowner John Wood, is credited with the founding of Woodstown. The town was created by the merger of two communities, Pilesgrove & Millbrook, which grew together.

From 1720 through the 1760s Salem's most recognizable style of homes, in patterned brick designs, were built following a tradition brought by settlers from England. By 1750 Salem County had more patterned brick houses (21) than any other area of the colonies except Maryland (22).

- On July 10th Upper and Lower Penn's Neck Townships are formed from Penn's Neck Township.
- 1722 A group of Episcopalians formally organized in Salem Town and wrote to London appealing for a minister.
- Freeholders minutes from 4/13/1724 to the present survive in the Salem County records.
- The Pilesgrove Friends Meeting (now Woodstown) is organized. The first Episcopal Church in Salem Town is founded.
- Samuel Fenwick Hedge deeds one acre of land on Market Street for the construction of an Episcopal Church in Salem Town.

- June 24th The Episcopal Church in Salem holds it's first service and takes the name St. John's.
- 1700s Mills were important to the community and by the mid 1700s Salem had any number to provide services to the local citizenry. John Mason founded his flour mill, later known as Maskill's Mill, (1702) in Elsinboro. Oliver Morrison and Thomas Hancock operated tide-mills in Elsinboro & Alloway. John Pym had a grist mill in Elmer. Other mills were in operation as well.
- Andrew Helm established a ferry service, from his tavern in Helm's Cove (today's Pennsgrove) to New Castle, DE.
- 5/10 the Freeholders and the Justices agree to build a new courthouse and on 5/23/1734 agreed to an enlargement of the plans. The courthouse was constructed at the corner of Market and Fenwick (East Broadway) streets and the first Freeholders meeting was held in the new building 11/1/1736.
 - Three ferry operations are licensed that make Salem more accessible for travel and business: 5/16 to Joseph Gregory to operate between Salem and Suppawny, 7/21 to Renier Gregory to operate between De Haw's Point and New Castle, DE, and 7/28 to William Watson to operate between Greenwich Wharf and Fairfield,De.
- A small octagonal brick law office is constructed for Salem Town's first resident attorney, John Jones. It was located on Market St. across from the Courthouse. (Having been moved twice, it now resides in the garden of the Salem County Historical Society.)
- 1738 The Friends organize a meeting in Allowaystown.
 - New Jersey is separated from New York officially and Lewis Morris is named the first Governor.
- 1739 Caspar Wistar, a Philadelphian with shrewd business acumen, establishes a glassworks near Allowaystown in Salem County which becomes the first successful glassworks in the Am. Colonies. The advantages for his choosing Salem are it's proximity to Wistar in Philadelphia, the superior quality of the sand needed to make the glass, the almost limitless supply of wood for the kilns, and it's easy access to waterways for shipping and travel. Wistar imports skilled glassworkers from Germany and Belgium to ensure the success of this venture.
- The Pittsgrove Presbyterian Church is organized on April 30th with the Rev. David Evans, from Wales, as first pastor. Land for a church was purchased from Louis and Margeret du Bois, 2 acres for 40s. A cedar log church (date?)

and school are constructed.

Lambson's Tavern is established on the road between Salem Town and Penn's Neck.

- 1743 Catholicism was illegal in New Jersey but with German and Belgian Catholic glassworkers in Salem Co. father S.J. Schneider made his first visit on 10/5. The Kiger (Geiger) family in Mannington secretly provided their house for priests who traveled from Philadelphia on a regular basis to provide the sacraments. Father Farmer, one of the priests, was a friend of Benjamin Franklin, a distinguished botanist, and co-founder, with Franklin, of the Junto or Literary Society of Philadelphia. It was not until the Am. Revolution that Catholics could legally practice their religion in Salem Co.
- 1747 A law was passed that in order to be sheriff a candidate must live in Salem Co. and the term was limited to one three year stint.
- 1748 Cumberland County was withdrawn from Salem County by an Act of the Legislature 1/19.

Emmanual Evangelical (German) Lutheran Church was organized at Friesburg for those settlers and glassworkers living in Alloway township part of Salem Co. It was constituted ca. 1748.

The Penn's Neck Presbyterian Church was also organized around this time

- The Logtown (Harmersville) Presbyterian Church was organized and shared a Minister with Penn's Neck. This was a wooden church building.
- 1751 Seven Stars Tavern is opened at a crossroads on the King's Highway between Sharptown and Swedesboro. This was an earlier building and not the brick 1762 building that stands in that location today. Other colonial taverns that before the Revolution operated in Salem Co. were Bassett House in Woodstown, Beetles Tavern in Upper Penn's Neck, and Champney's Tavern (which later was renamed Pole Tavern during the War of 1812).
- Hancock's Bridge Friends Meeting is organized. Building land is donated by Judge William Hancock and a brick structure is constructed in 1756.
- 1755 First Baptist Church organized in Salem County and built on land donated by Daniel Smith, Jr. at Mill Hollow between Salem and Quinton. Named the Ante-Paedo Baptist Church of Salem and Alloways Creek.
- 1758 The first liquor license was granted to a holstelry in Salem Co. to serve drinks to the public.

- 1763 The boundary between Salem and Cumberland counties is confirmed on 12/7.
- The Court at Salem legally authorized that a road was to be laid out from Helm's Landing easterly to Pennsville and on to Carney's Mill (now Layton's Lake).
 - 10/29 a New Pilesgrove Township is formed by Royal Charter to correct the Charter of 5/24/1764 that listed erroneous boundaries. On 6/16/1767 the 1764 Charter is surrendered.
- A Royal Charter of 6/17 divides Alloways Creek Township into two parts now to be known as Upper Alloways Creek Township and Lower Alloways Creek Township.
 - A new brick church replaces the old log church of the Pittsgrove Presbyterian Congregation.
- 1769 A Royal Charter of 12/6 divides Pilesgrove Township creating Pittsgrove Township.
- 1771 The stage coach line of William Shute and Jacob Paullin is advertised. ? (search for more info).
- 1772 Salem Friends build a brick meeting house on Fenwick St. (East Broadway). Salem Friends have the distinction of having the record for the longest continuous meetings in New Jersey.
- The Whigs in Salem County were preparing for confrontation with Britain, (revolution was underway), by holding meetings to unite, and organizing and drilling a militia. The general public was exhorted to practice self-sufficiency, to break reliance on British goods, and to manufacture and purchase colonial products.
- 1775 A new stone jail is built in Salem Town at the corner of Market St. and Fenwick St. (East Broadway). It is two stories and includes cells and jailers residence.
- The first engagement with the British in Salem County takes place in the Delaware River off of Helm's Cove. On May 7 & 8 The Battle of the Row Galleys occurs and a canon ball is fired from the stranded Frigate Roebuck at the jeering Patriots on the shore. The missile lodges in the wall of Helm's Tavern to become a relic of our War of Independence.
 - The Constitution for the State of New Jersey is signed July 2, 1776. It is of special note that this constitution allowed free black men and women the vote.

July 4, 1776 The Declaration of Independence is signed by delegates of the Thirteen Colonies and War is official. Salem County's bountiful farms will become an important resource for supplying American troops.

Samuel Dick a recent citizen of Salem becomes a member of the N.J. Provincial congress. He serves in the militia and is an assistant surgeon in the Continental Army; member of the first State general assembly, member of the Continental Congress in 1784-1785 and delegate to the N.J. State convention of 1787 to ratify the Federal Constitution.

In February Col. Abercrombie and 500 British troops arrive in Salem by water from Philadelphia to forage for supplies. They raid Salem farms taking livestock and produce.

March 17, 1778 British Col. Mawhood and Majors Sims and Simcoe marched into Salem with a force of almost 1500 men. The patriot line of defense was Quinton's Bridge on Alloways Creek. On March 18th foragers out of Salem Town engaged patriots near the creek and the more experience British returned and led the patriots into a trap cutting them down and sending them into a scattered retreat. Am. Capt. William Smith and Andrew Bacon were the leaders of this group that we recognize as heroes of the fray.

March 20, 1778 In a skirmish in Penn's Neck Am. Capt. Andrew Sinneckson led the men who drove the British out of Penn's Neck Township.

March 21, 1778, with information from local Tories, the British troops stage an early morning raid on Judge William Hancock's house in Hancock's Bridge catching Am. Patriot forces unawares. The slaughter of the troops and the aged judge becomes a rallying cry for New Jersey patriots. This did break American resistance in the area and with the departure of the British forces Salem County's military action was over. Salem patriots continued to provide men for troops and food to sustain Washington's Army.

March 28, 1778 the British troops, having burned the house and buildings of Am. Col. John Holme, confiscated the furniture including a highly prized tall case clock by Thomas Wagstaffe of London and took it with them to New York. In an amazing set of circumstances the Col. was able to retrieve the clock after the War.

St. John's Church, having so many patriots in the congregation, is seriously damaged by the English troops seeking retaliation. The building remained in disrepair for years due to lack of funds to rebuild it.

1780's After the Revolution farming in Salem County suffers a depression and with land being offered cheap or free to veterans many families moved west. It would be decades before Salem's farmers would recover; however, the land

was rich and recovery was inevitable.

- 1784-85 The first Methodist churches are built in Salem Town and Centerton and an addition enlarges the Friend's Meeting in Hancock's Bridge.
- 1785 The Friends Meeting in Woodstown builds a new brick building.
- St. George's in Pennsville is incorporated as the Protestant Episcopal Church in Penn's Neck.
- 1787 Salem Academy is constructed on Market Street having been founded on November 1, 1783.

The Baptists build a brick church on Yorke St. in Salem Town on land given by Mary Dunlop.

- Willow Grove Mill is established near Elmer and remained in service until it burned in 1959.
- 1790 Ebenezer Methodist church in Auburn is constructed.
- 1793 Samuel Dick is elected to the Continental Congress and is the first Congressman from Salem County.
- 1794 The Stony Island Meadow Co. is formed in Salem County to bank and drain wetlands for farming. A N.J. State law permitting the formation of these corporations had been passed in 1778.

About this time the Pilesgrove Methodist Church between Sharptown and Auburn was built and the Friends built a Meeting House in Pedricktown and another in Penn's Neck Township. (?need info)

An Act of the Legislature gives the county sheriffs control of jails and this remained in force for almost a century.

The county purchases a building (former tavern) and land for a county almshouse on the road between Salem Town and Woodstown.

The first Friends Meeting House is built in Penn's Neck Township.

The N.J. State Legislature passes a law incorporating towns of Salem, Elsinboro, Lower Alloways Creek Township, Lower Penn's Neck Township, Mannington, Pilesgrove, Pittsgrove, Upper Alloways Creek Township, and Upper Penn's Neck Township; and, establishes that two Freeholders shall be elected from each of eight municipalities, (The Justices no longer are to serve on the Freeholder Board), with first meeting held on May 9th.

The Freeholders vote to build offices for the County Clerk and Surrogate.

By the end of the century Salem County has 32 grist and flour mills and at least 19 sawmills using tide, pond/stream water and wind for power.